blended yarns containing polyester fibre was reduced with effect from 28th August, 1985. However, to ensure that the benefits of reduction of duty go mainly to cheaper fabrics, the incidence of excise duty on fabrics containing polyester fibre and of assessable value exceeding Rs. 25 per sq. mt. was increased by Rs. 2 per sq. mt. The increase in duty was thus only on such costlier fabrics containing polyester fibre, irrespective of whether such fabrics contain filament yarn or not. No increase was made in excise duty rates on fabrics containing only filament yarns. Thus there does not appear to be any anomaly in the excise duty structure relating to fabrics on account of the new textile policy.

Child labour

1036. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to the All India survey sponsored by Government there is about 44 million child labour force in the country of which one-sixth is of tender age; and

(b) if so, what steps are contemplated by Government to tackle the growing problem of child labour in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJAIAH): (a) The Ministry of Labour has rendered financial assistance to Operations Research Group, Baroda for conducting a study entitled. "All India Survey on Child Labour". According to the study the total number of working children is estimated to be 44 million. However, Government has not accepted the findings of this study. According to the estimates made by the Planning Commission the number of child workers was 17.36 million as on 1st March, 1980.

(b) while it may not be possible in the near future to eliminate child labour completely in the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country, it has been Government's consistent endeavour to ensure that children compelled to work by circumstances should not be exploited and should be able to work in better conditions of health and hygine. Government has been rendering financial assistance to voluntary agencies for action-projects connected with the welfare of working children. Also in pursuance of the recommendations of the Gurupadaswamy committee a Central Advistory Board on child labour has been set up to advise the Government on the problems of child labour any State Governments and Union Territories have set up State and District level advisory boards on child labour

Condition of Indian Labourers abroad

1037. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Indian workers smuggled out by agents with false promises, are being employed on low wages in Syria Lebanon and various other countries and some of the them have also been lodged in jails;

(b) if so, what is the number of such Indian workers living in pathetic conditions on unusually low wages and those lodged in jails for illegal entry in different countries; and

(c) what steps are being taken to repatriate them or to secure proper working and living conditions for them in those countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJAIAH): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.